

**Welcome Reception Hosted by Mayor Dutkiewicz
Thursday, May 31, 2012**

Dobry wieczór. Witam wszystkich Państwa!

President Dutkiewicz, Distinguished Guests:

As co-host of the Wrocław Global Forum, I would like to welcome you all to an event that just gets bigger and better every year.

Wrocław, or should I say, Vrots Love, is truly a Meeting Place, as the city motto says. It is certainly a place near to my heart.

And my own home. Mayor Dutkiewicz recently presented an official Wrocław Krasnał to me at my residence in Warsaw, so daily my guests and I are reminded of the historic relationship and the ongoing friendship between Wrocław and the United States. It has become quite popular also with my children.

Every day dozens of Wroclawians visit our American Corner on the Market Square to be a little bit closer to the United States. Business is also good, as the presence of American businesses in Wroclaw and Dolny Slask continues to grow. We are truly proud of the connections we have with Wroclaw.

Turning to this year's forum, we have here again an impressive list of speakers and participants from Poland and the United States, and genuine heroes from around the world who have risked everything in the fight for freedom. I know I am personally looking forward to hearing from many of them, as we continue working to promote the cause of democracy and human rights around the world, and to keep trans-Atlantic links strong.

This year's Wroclaw Global Forum falls exactly 40 years after President Richard Nixon's visit to Poland, the first by a sitting American President ever to Poland (JQ Adams had visited Breslau as an ambassador to Prussia, Kennedy came to Poland as Senator, and Nixon as VP). The intensification of ties the Nixon visit represented was only one step in a long process towards greater opening, but would lead one day to the collapse of the Communist system. A great deal has changed since 1972, but the friendship of the American and Polish people has remained constant.

Welcome again to an outstanding program in a beautiful city. I can't think of a better place and a better way to advance those common goals.